



Policy Recommendations

Phase I of the Plan development included an assessment of existing state and federal planning laws and existing Transportation Commission policies. This existing set of directives was the benchmark against which the proposed needs were evaluated. For the most part it was determined that existing policy guidance provide clear expectations and afforded implementation strategies leading to success. In selected areas where either innovative investment concepts or programs were proposed it was determined that existing policy was insufficient to guide future investment decisions.

This section of the Plan is a summary of gaps in transportation investment policy guidance and that do not provide sufficient direction to address a problem, direct investment options, or guide program outcomes. Adoption and implementation of the recommendations in this chapter of the Plan will provide momentum to establish the necessary guidance for improving strategic transportation investment decisions.

- The Commission recommends that the state's role in making specific transportation investments needs to be clarified or defined for the first time.
- In addition the Commission recommends that data collection and further study is needed in several areas to better understand a problem.
- It is further recommended that in the near future all existing Transportation Commission policies should be evaluated in light of the changes to their role and responsibilities as a result of state legislation in 2005 and 2006. The evaluation process will need to include updating, consolidation, and editing to make these policies more effective tools to guide Washington's transportation future.

Preservation

Existing Commission Policies

- Protect our investments by keeping transportation infrastructure in sound operating condition.
- Emphasize infrastructure preservation and maintenance as the priority in funding transportation programs.
- Use lowest life-cycle cost methodology to determine the appropriate schedule for upkeep.

Existing practices in Washington transportation agencies and at the Department of Transportation are sufficient in addressing preservation throughout the planning, design, engineering, and construction phases for delivering transportation facilities. No additional policy direction is requested at this time.

Safety

Existing Commission Policies

- Improve safety through continuous reduction in the societal cost of accidents.
- Emphasize traveler safety and security as a primary consideration in the planning, designing, constructing, maintaining, and operating of all transportation systems.
- Support comprehensive transportation safety programs that target improving operator behavior and vehicle design and condition.

Action	Outcome
<p>Strategic Highway Safety Plan</p> <p>Federal, state, and local agencies, and private organizations have been consulted and have contributed to the development of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. This plan provides a comprehensive framework of specific goals, objectives, and strategies for reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries. The Washington Transportation Plan recognizes the recommendations of the Strategic Highway Safety Plan as the necessary policy and action strategies to address the long-range safety needs of Washington state.</p>	<p>Reduction in fatalities and injuries resulting from automobile collisions.</p>
<p>Improve Safety Data and Sharing</p> <p>In cooperation with those involved in current efforts to produce the Statewide Highway Safety Plan, the Department of Transportation should implement a traffic records strategic plan to decrease paper usage by keeping electronic records; develop the Emergency Management System registry; improve data detail and location accuracy; improve statewide collision data; and design new law enforcement traffic collision reports and citizen reports.</p>	<p>Increase amount of safety data available for analysis. Increase analysis capacity. Improve safety-related data at various jurisdiction levels. Use improved safety data to target system improvements.</p>

Safety Continued

Action	Outcome
Aviation Study	
General Aviation (GA) Airport Weather Safety Feasibility Study will determine needed weather-related improvements to airports.	Determine needed weather- related improvements to GA airports, make airports safer, and more effective.
Address Truck Parking Capacity on State Highways	
The Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Washington State Patrol, the industry (trucking and truck stop providers), and the RTPOs should recommend options for defining the state's role and appropriate investment, if any, in providing adequate, safe, and legal areas near state highways where commercial truckers can park and rest. The WSDOT 2005 Truck Parking Study should provide information for this process to develop an action plan.	<p>An action plan to address how best to provide truck parking and rest areas, determine the various stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, and identify where truck parking and rest areas are needed most.</p> <p>It is the goal of this action plan to provide safe and legal areas for commercial truck drivers to park so that drivers can take federally mandated rests during long drives and decrease truck driver fatigue. Decrease the number of trucks parked illegally in undesirable and unsafe areas, such as weigh stations, chain up/down areas, highway ramps and shoulders, and local streets and parking lots by providing additional safe and legal parking capacity. Improve safety on highways and local roads. Increase transportation security. Decrease environmental impacts of truck parking and idling. Support for interstate commerce.</p>

Economic Vitality

Existing Commission Policies

- Support the economy through reduced barriers to the movement of people, products, and information.
- Support investments in freight transportation services and infrastructure that maintain Washington's competitive geographic advantage for world and domestic trade, and contribute to the economic productivity of the state.
- Value the movement of freight and people equitably.
- To the degree possible, streamline laws and regulations impacting freight transportation to allow ease of compliance and coordinated administration among jurisdictions.
- Support transportation investment that contributes to economic development.
- Support those aspects of the transportation system which enhance tourism.
- Develop good connections across interstate and international borders.

Action	Outcome
<p>Statewide core all-weather county road system</p> <p>The Transportation Commission should recommend a policy regarding the state's role in establishing and funding a statewide core all-weather county road system. Develop a process to identify and prioritize investments that will minimize the economic impacts of freeze-and-thaw-related road closures on freight dependent industries, by identifying the most critical routes affected by icy winter roads through working with Freight Stakeholders, TIB, CRAB, WSAC, and the Department of Transportation.</p>	<p>Connect businesses and industries to the state highway system so that they can ship and receive products year-round. Prioritize investments to provide maximum benefit for affected industries and regional economies. Support the state's job base in agribusiness, manufacturing, construction, and natural resource-based sectors.</p>

Economic Vitality Continued

Action	Outcome
Regional Economic Development	
<p>The Department of Transportation should work with cities, counties and local economic development councils, regional agencies, and the private sector to evaluate the economy and the economic development impacts of transportation infrastructure and services. The Department should also develop performance measures and rating criteria, so that future project selection can provide the best return on investment for growing Washington's economy, and implement existing Transportation Commission policies.</p>	<p>Improved coordination of future capital funds will promote investments in job-producing private development and help expand the tax base for other necessary public services and facilities. Improved understanding of how transportation contributes to regional economies.</p>
Economic Sectors and Clusters	
<p>The Department of Transportation should work with the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development and the private sector to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine a way to measure transportation investment outcomes and identify investments that contribute to regional economies. Identify the dependencies of various clusters on the transportation system. • Identify the transportation system elements critical to maintaining and improving the performance and global competitiveness of these clusters. • Determine the state's share of transportation investments to meet these needs. 	<p>A clear understanding of how transportation benefits Washington's economy; enhanced global competitiveness of Washington's transportation reliant industry clusters; maximized opportunities for transportation investment partnerships with cluster industries; align agency missions and target common goals to increase effectiveness of state government investment. Development of a basis for measuring economic benefits of transportation investments.</p>
Emergency Preparedness and System Disruption Plan	
<p>Clarify the state's role in ensuring timely restoration of freight service in the event of a major disruption to the transportation system.</p> <p>Develop a strategic plan for timely restoration of service that prioritizes freight transportation needs based on economic and quality of life impacts.</p>	<p>Plan and practice the State's response to high-impact and unpredictable events that would critically affect the freight transportation system serving Washington State. Minimize negative short-term and long-term impacts to the state's economic vitality and quality of life.</p>

Action	Outcome
Develop and sustain economic growth	
Clarify the state's role in helping regional economies make capital investments in freight systems to develop and sustain economic growth. Support an ongoing, appropriate level of funding for regional economic development freight projects, port and intermodal access improvements, grade separations, short line rail improvements, and truck route programs to optimize truck movements in metro areas.	Provide incentives to help communities within a region prioritize desired freight improvements. Assist communities in developing and sustaining economic growth through investments in regional freight systems. Improve port and intermodal access. Mitigate the impact of growth in freight rail volumes on Washington State communities. Provide incentives to optimize truck movements in congested urban areas.
Fuel Distribution and Pipeline Capacity	
Determine the state's role in ensuring that fuel distribution and pipeline capacity alternatives meet Washington's long-term demand. Analyze the constraints and develop a strategy to remove obstructions so that the market can respond to increasing demand.	Support the state's long-term economic vitality by ensuring that fuel is efficiently supplied to Washington citizens and businesses. Respond to increasing demand for fuel, when there is no plan to increase pipeline or refinery capacity in the state.
Main Line Rail	
Following the completion of the Transportation Commission Rail Study, determine the state's role in enhancing main line freight rail capacity. Develop a main line rail strategic plan to implement policy direction contained in the recommendations from the Transportation Commission Rail Study.	Add main line rail capacity to support growth in international trade and regional economies. Improve safety. Maximize system capacity and eliminate or reduce bottlenecks. Improve the freight- passenger train interface and prevent future conflicts of service. Mitigate the impact of growth in freight rail volumes on Washington State communities.

Economic Vitality Continued

Action	Outcome
Short Line Rail	
<p>Following the completion of the Transportation Commission Rail Study, the Department of Transportation—in cooperation with rail operators, shippers, and the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board—should develop business-based policies for management of state-owned rail assets and define criteria for future investments in short line railroads.</p> <p>Develop a strategic business plan to implement policies and address the viability of the short line railroad system in Washington, to include an analysis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability of short line railroads to support regional economic development, with a comparison of the opportunity costs for alternate investments. • Freight market trends that impact short line railroad viability. • Track conditions and the cost of improvements required to operate the lines safely and efficiently. • Impacts on county roads and the highway system if short line and/or branch lines aren't viable. Separate analysis to be done for each low-volume, at-risk branch line. • Commitment of main line rail service at level sufficient to attract targeted customers. 	<p>Clarify the state's role regarding financial support of short line freight railroads, and develop methods to fully assess the economic impact of such investments. Focus limited public resources on the most productive investment proposals. Support the development of regional economies and national and international trade.</p> <p>Selection of short line freight rail projects are linked to achieving maximum investment potential.</p>
Columbia-Snake River Trade Corridor:	
<p>Define a policy to ensure the long-term viability of the Columbia-Snake River trade corridor. In partnership with other responsible federal and state agencies, take a leadership role to assure sound management of the locks, jetties, and main channel.</p> <p>Develop and implement a strategic plan (in coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredging and lock maintenance plan) to dredge, maintain locks and jetties, and deepen the Columbia River channel down river.</p>	<p>Prevent closure or decreased efficiency of the Columbia-Snake River trade corridor for waterborne traffic. Maintain navigation infrastructure to accommodate increasingly larger ships and growing inland barge movements. Support economic growth by providing Washington State agribusiness and U.S. grain shippers with efficient access to world markets. Avoid increased freight traffic on Columbia Gorge highways and rail lines.</p>
Events of Statewide Significance	
<p>2010 Olympics—Participation in the Governor's 2010 Winter Olympics Task Force to seek grant funding; deliver priority projects; align project schedule to reduce travel delays, document successful projects and share outcomes.</p>	<p>Enhanced traveler experience for visitors to the state during the Vancouver Winter Olympics; return trips to Washington state after the Olympics, increasing tourism's contribution to the state economy.</p>

Mobility

Existing Commission Policies

- Make customer service primary.
- Consider, and implement where appropriate, operational changes that improve efficiency before expanding the existing transportation system.
- Operate transportation systems to work reliably and responsibly for the customer.
- Incorporate long-term operations needs in capital investment decisions.
- Promote the use of advanced technologies to improve system efficiency and service.
- Consider system operations a separate budget category with high priority for funding.
- Aggressively pursue access management to protect operations of existing and future systems.
- Identify and preserve vital transportation corridors and sites for future transportation uses.
- Support regions in adopting different and regionally appropriate mobility strategies.
- Promote modal connections to provide seamless travel to the customer.
- Provide mobility for people with special needs.
- Use cost-benefit methodologies as key determinants in selecting mobility projects.
- Provide viable mobility choices for the customer and expand the system to accommodate growth.
- Recognize that there will be congestion on the system and the ability to control congestion by expansion of the system is limited due to funding and other considerations. Promote land management, telecommunications, and other innovative technologies as viable mobility options to reduce the impact of congestion on all system users. Support limited strategic expansions to accommodate growth and reduce congestion when possible.
- Recognize that the primary mode of travel for Washington citizens will continue to be the private automobile, but provide citizens with mobility choices which include, at a minimum, some forms of public transportation.

Action	Outcome
<p>Aviation</p> <p>Address long-term passenger, cargo, and airport capacity and facility needs.</p> <p>Complete a statewide airport capacity and facilities study by July 06; conduct market assessment of aviation demand, needs, and forecasted needs for next 25 years, by July 2007; Governor-appointed commission to develop recommendations on long-term needs for commercial and general aviation airports by July 2009.</p>	<p>Identify gaps and deficiencies within the air transportation system and provide recommendations on how to address future long-term passenger, air cargo, and airport facility needs.</p>

Mobility Continued

Action	Outcome
Aviation	<p>The study will focus on 139 commercial and general aviation airports within the state with emphasis on commercial aviation. The purpose of the study is to understand what capacity currently exists in aviation facilities and what will be needed to meet future demands for air transportation and increased economic opportunities. The study will also assist in promoting the effective use of federal, state, regional, and local aviation resources. High-speed passenger rail will also be evaluated as part of the study.</p>
<p>The Department of Transportation should complete the aviation system plan with classification of airports and performance standards.</p>	<p>See Part 3 for details on all phases of this study and plan update.</p>
	<p>Schedule: Underway—Targeted completion: Phase 1—July 1, 2006 Phase 2—July 1, 2007 Phase 3—July 1, 2009</p>
Ferries	<p>The Washington Transportation Plan will result in strategic system improvements to increase capacity and reduce delay. As part of its System Plan update within the framework of the Washington Transportation Plan, Washington State Ferries (WSF) is assessing and defining options for ferry service reconfiguration to meet increasing travel demand.</p>
<p>The Department of Transportation should recommend a policy to the Governor for Washington State Ferries service options, for reconfiguration needed to meet increasing demand.</p>	<p>Schedule: The Ferry System Plan is expected to be ready for Transportation Commission review in the spring of 2006, followed by public comment and plan adoption in the summer of 2006.</p>

Action	Outcome
<p>System Tolling Study</p> <p>The Transportation Commission is currently conducting a comprehensive tolling study that is expected to develop a policy framework to address eight key questions on tolling:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What role can tolling play in developing and managing Washington's transportation system? 2. How should Washington decide which parts of the system to toll or price? 3. What rules should govern the use of toll revenue? 4. What rules should govern setting toll rates? 5. What is the most appropriate governance and organizational structure? 6. How do technology and toll operations influence toll policy? 7. How do equity, fairness, and uniformity issues influence toll policy? 8. What are the implications of alternative toll policies at the Tacoma Narrows Bridge? 	<p>Provide guidance for when to use tolling as a tool to increase transportation system performance and reliability. Establish a single user experience "one gizmo, one phone number, one statement."</p> <p>Note: Further information about the details of this study is included in Part 3.</p> <p>Schedule: Underway—Targeted completion of final report on July 30, 2006.</p>
<p>Future Funding</p> <p>In cooperation with the Governor's Office, the Department of Revenue, the Office of Financial Management, the Department of Transportation should propose options for a transportation funding strategy based on alternative fuels.</p>	<p>New source of transportation funding, to offset a portion of revenues lost annually by reduction in fuel consumption by fuel efficient vehicles.</p>
<p>Passenger Rail</p> <p>Update strategy for intercity passenger rail system expansion (Statewide Rail Capacity and Needs Analysis).</p>	<p>Improve consistency between available funding and expansion plans. Critical system expansion and operation improvements identified and future investments justified by benefits.</p>
<p>Intercity Transportation and Basic Access</p> <p>Define as policy the state's role and the level of state investment in public transportation service to provide basic access and intercity transportation.</p>	<p>Clarify state role for intercity transportation investment. Improve connection between rural and urban centers. Intercity transportation provides a vital link between rural communities and urban areas. This will provide a framework that can be used to develop programs that address basic connectivity between communities, define goals for connecting rural areas to urban service centers, and reduce rural isolation. The policy will also provide the local communities and service providers a clear vision of the state's interest in intercity transportation, and allow these partners to participate in meeting the needs.</p>

Mobility Continued

Action	Outcome
Corridor Efficiency	
The Department of Transportation in cooperation with Washington State Transit Association and others should develop a strategy for closer integration between roadway and transit operations.	Public transportation improves the efficiency of the highway system by moving more people with fewer vehicles, improves person throughput on congested corridors, and provides travel options beyond a single occupancy vehicle.
Travel Conservation Approaches	
The Department of Transportation should identify needed policy adjustments to ensure continued effectiveness of the High Occupancy Vehicle system.	More efficient movement of roadway system for increased capacity, improved air quality, and improved travel times and reliability.
Park and Ride Lots for Corridor Efficiency	
Demand for parking at lots in congested corridors is high and many facilities are at or over capacity. The lack of available parking along these critical highways affects the efficiency of the highway system. The Department of Transportation's Office of Transit Mobility in cooperation with the Washington State Transit Association and others should develop a strategy for determining the state role in park and ride facilities, particularly lots that improve highway efficiency on congested corridors.	<p>Park and ride lots strategically located on key highway corridors are integral to improving the efficiency of the system. The facilities work in conjunction with other highway system investments including HOV lanes and direct access ramps.</p> <p>Development and implementation of a park and ride policy will help define the role of the state and improve the efficiency of our transportation system. This policy will serve as a guide for a long-term park and ride lot program. Prevent loss of existing park and ride lots. Add capacity where most needed.</p>
New Technologies and Alternative Fuels	
Work closely with the Governor's Office, the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, and the Department of Ecology to develop a strategy to adapt to demand for alternative vehicles and fuels.	Adapt transportation system to serve evolving needs. The transportation system is based on sustainable fuel supplies.

Environmental Quality

Commission Policies

- Meet environmental responsibilities.
- Minimize, and avoid when practical, air, water, and noise pollution; energy usage; use of hazardous materials; flood impacts; and impacts on wetlands and heritage resources from transportation activities.
- When practical, and consistent with other priorities, protect, restore, and enhance fish and wildlife habitats and wetlands impacted by transportation facilities.
- Coordinate and take the lead in partnering with other agencies in environmental issues affecting transportation to reduce costs and increase effectiveness.

Proposed WTP Environmental Quality Policy and Strategy Actions

Action	Outcome
Tribal Consultation The Department of Transportation and the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations should work together to improve implementation of the Centennial Accord and create additional guidance for tribal consultation for transportation planning.	Improved communication will identify issues early in project development so that project teams can reduce conflict or delay.

Environmental Quality Continued

Action	Outcome
Path and Trails	
<p>The Department of Transportation should work with the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation and the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations to develop a strategy for path and trail investments, similar to state pedestrian program investments.</p>	<p>Improve safety and mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists. Improve coordination between local comprehensive plans and the WTP.</p>
Healthy Communities	
<p>The Department of Transportation should coordinate with the Growth Management Services Division of the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. The two departments should convene a task force to identify sources and ways of pooling funds in order to support local governments seeking assistance in addressing the Growth Management Act requirement to include a pedestrian and bicycle component in comprehensive plans.</p>	<p>Pedestrian and bicycle facilities and network constructed to provide for safe and healthy transportation options through walking and biking.</p>
Emissions Reduction	
<p>Working with the Department of Ecology, MPOs and FHWA, the Department of Transportation should refine policy regarding the state's position and appropriate role in reducing freight-related diesel emissions.</p> <p>Identify strategies and solutions that minimize adverse air quality impacts of freight related diesel emissions, while ensuring continued freight mobility and support of freight dependent industries. Develop a program and pilot structure based on the strategic plan and its policy direction. Coordinate with regional, state, and national groups to refine strategies and advance pilot projects in Washington.</p>	<p>Reduce adverse side effects of diesel-related emissions, including air pollution and health risks. Prioritize the numerous strategies and technologies that may help reduce harmful emissions. Ensure continued support of an efficient freight transportation system, where strategies and programs enhance industry and carrier needs. Reduce toxic emissions. Improve fuel efficiency.</p>

